



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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SACHI A. HAMAI
Chief Executive Officer

March 7, 2016

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From:

Sachi A. Hamai

Chief Executive Officer

MOTION TO DIRECT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND THE SACRAMENTO ADVOCATES TO SUPPORT SB 115 (FULLER), AND THE STATE'S EFFORTS TO COMBAT VALLEY FEVER DISEASE (ITEM NO. 32-D, SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA OF MARCH 8, 2016)

Item No. 32-D on the March 8, 2016 Supplemental Agenda is a motion by Supervisor Antonovich instructing the Chief Executive Officer and the Sacramento advocates to support SB 115 (Fuller), and the State's efforts to combat Valley Fever disease.

Background

Valley Fever is caused by air or soil disturbance of the *Coccidioides* fungi, which live and breed within the soil. When soil is disturbed by strong winds or by activities such as construction or farming, the spores can become airborne. When inhaled, the fungus attacks the respiratory system and can cause infection, but cannot spread from person to person. While most people infected with Valley Fever will not have any symptoms, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) reports that symptomatic diseases similar to a cold, influenza, or pneumonia will develop in approximately 40 percent of patients and can be life threatening to people with medical conditions that weaken their immune system, such as cancer or HIV.

In 2009, the State allocated \$700,000, and in the following years as much as \$1.7 million annually, for the Valley Fever Vaccine Project, an inter-institutional cooperative led by the California State University, Bakersfield Foundation. However, the allocation ended in 2010 and research has since stalled. The bill's author reports

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that researchers are closer to developing a vaccine and indicates that experts say that efforts to combat the disease have stalled due to the lack of funding and serious attention to Valley Fever. In 2014, the Federal Food and Drug Administration announced plans to add Valley Fever to its Generating Antibiotic Incentives Now program, intended to incentivize pharmaceutical companies by extending the period antibiotics or vaccines can be sold without any generic-brand competition on the market for five years.

The Department of Public Health (DPH) reports that Valley Fever cases have increased in Los Angeles County over the last 15 years, with 426 residents reported infected in 2014. DPH states that development of a vaccine would be the most effective way to prevent Valley Fever, and that it is supportive of funding for a vaccine. DPH further notes that the California Conference of Local Health Officers has supported funding for similar Valley Fever initiatives in the past.

Conclusion

The County's 2015-16 State Legislative Agenda contains policies to support proposals that establish, enhance, or fund research for disease and infection control; however, the proposed funding for research will not be directed to the County, but rather to agencies external to the County, which is not specifically addressed by the policy platform. **Therefore, support for this motion is a matter for Board policy determination.**

SB 115 is supported by American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees; California Life Science Association, Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment; Central California Environmental Justice Network, Coalition for Clear Air, Comite Si Se Puede, Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles, and others. There is currently no registered opposition on file.

The measure is currently in the Assembly Appropriations Committee and is awaiting a hearing.

We will continue to keep you advised.

SAH:JJ:MR
TOF:ma

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel